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SUBJECT: RUSSIA: 2009 COUNTRY REPORT ON TERRORISM

REF: STATE 109980

¶1. Per reftel, post submits the 2009 Country Report on Terrorism for Russia. Embassy POC for this report is poloff Jules Silberberg, office phone: 7-495-728-5042; email: silberbergjd@state.gov.

General Assessment

¶2. Terrorist attacks resumed in European Russia with the November 27 attack on the Moscow to St. Petersburg express train. A second explosion, as investigators combed the site of the attack for clues, occurred the following day and injured the chief of the Investigative Committee. Chechen separatists or ultra-nationalists are the primary suspects in this incident, which killed 26 and wounded 90. It is the deadliest terrorist incident in Russia outside the North Caucasus since 2004.

¶3. Terrorist attacks also continued in the North Caucasus, where the decline in violence in Chechnya has been replaced by an increase in terrorism in Dagestan, North Ossetia, and Ingushetia. These attacks were often difficult to differentiate from criminal acts motivated by greed or revenge. Russia did not offer safe haven to terrorists, but there was evidence of a foreign terrorist presence in the North Caucasus with international financial and ideological ties. Russia claims to have interdicted 69 terrorist operations in 2009, although the government has not provided many details. The Russian government continued to view counterterrorism as a top priority in the bilateral relationship, and considered its cooperation in this field with the United States a major success.

¶4. The 1998 federal law "On Fighting Terrorism" and the 2006 federal law "On Countering Terrorism" remain the main counterterrorism legal authorities. On January 11 President Medvedev signed amendments to the law "On Countering Terrorism" that abrogate jury trial for espionage and terrorism cases. In April, Russia lifted an almost ten-year long anti-terrorist regime in Chechnya that had severely restricted civil liberties and put the region under the direct authority of the Federal Security Service (FSB). In July the Ministry of Justice drafted a law on compensation for civilian victims of counter terrorist operations. The National Antiterrorism Committee, organized in 2006, is the main government body coordinating the Russian government's response to the terrorist threat. Interagency efforts to combat terrorism through anti-narcotics enforcement remain a challenge, particularly the use of financial intelligence to interrupt narcotics sales that provide revenue to terrorists.

¶5. While the terrorism in Chechnya had been directly tied with separatist movements, the growing violence elsewhere in the region is harder to classify and is sometimes attributed to conflicts among clans or criminal activities. Throughout the North Caucasus, groups have for the most part moved away from mass attacks on civilians in favor of targeted attacks on policemen, local interior ministry officials, and departments responsible for fighting the insurgency. On June 5 a sniper killed the Dagestan Interior Ministry chief and on June 22 Ingush President Yevkurov was injured by a suicide bomber. In August an attack on an Ingush police station killed 20

and wounded 90.

Terrorism Financing

¶6. Russia is a member of the Financial Action Task Force on Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing (FATF). It is also a leading member, chair, and primary funding source of a similar body known as the Eurasian Group on combating money laundering and financing of terrorism (EAG). The EAG members are Russia, China, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan. Russia, through the EAG, provides technical assistance and funding towards improving legislative and regulatory frameworks and operational capabilities.

Foreign Government Cooperation

¶7. The U.S. and Russian Counterterrorism Coordinators met in November to advance cooperation within the context of the United States-Russia Counterterrorism Working Group. They agreed to work together in the multilateral arena to strengthen international counterterrorism norms and increase capacity building; to focus on Afghanistan with particular regard to counterterrorism/terrorism finance issues, with special reference to strengthening the UNSCR 1267 sanctions, and on countering the ideological dimension of violent extremism; and to work on improving the bilateral exchange of transportation security issues.

¶8. Cooperation continued on a broad range of counterterrorism issues, including efforts to destroy, safeguard, and prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. U.S. and Russian law enforcement agencies share substantive, concrete terrorism

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intelligence. Regulating and investigating terrorist websites was a major concern with numerous requests to the U.S. for assistance from both the FSB and the Cybercrime Directorate.

¶9. At the St. Petersburg G8 Summit in July 2006, the United States and Russia jointly announced the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism and invited other nations to join. The Initiative demonstrated Russia's effort to take a leadership role to combat nuclear terrorism. It now includes 75 partner nations, which cooperate in a variety of ways, including safeguarding radioactive and nuclear materials, preventing nuclear smuggling, and sharing information. In July 2009 President Medvedev joined President Obama in a Joint Statement, which pledged enhanced efforts to prevent WMD terrorism through international cooperation, citing the fifth plenary meeting of the Initiative in the Netherlands in June.

¶10. In June, Russia hosted the Eighth International Meeting of the Heads of special services, security agencies, and law-enforcement organizations, which the FBI, CIA, DOE, and NCTC attended. The ninth meeting is scheduled for June 2010 in Yekaterinburg, Russia. The 2009 agenda included discussion of use of the Internet for terrorist purposes, efforts to counter radicalization and the subsequent recruitment of terrorists, the development of an international counterterrorism database, and the prevention of WMD terrorism through UNSCR 1540 and other instruments.

¶11. Russia continued to work with regional groups to address terrorism, including the EU, NATO (through the NATO-Russia Council), the SCO, and the OSCE.

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